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This New Freedom

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A heart-to-heart talk with Young Americans about

"Getting Ready" for College

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

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A Heart-to-Heart Talk About "Getting Ready for College"

BY HENRY LOUIS SMITH.

For every young mariner who makes shipwreck of his college course because he is unprepared for college *study* a dozen go on the rocks because they are unprepared for college *life*.

The "hardest" course of your Freshman year is not going to be Math., or French, or Physics, but "*the right use of freedom*." Your units may be ample, your school grades near the top, your intelligence tests all your proud parents could wish, but if you are "unprepared" for this one course, if you cannot stand this one searching test of your character and self-control, you will soon land on the college scrap-heap.

Forget for a moment, therefore, all questions of grades and units and diplomas, and solemnly ask yourself this question: *Am I "getting ready" for the intoxicating freedom of college life?*

This New Freedom.

You are approaching the dangerous "no man's land" between the ordered, controlled, supervised life of the home and boarding-school, and the freedom of manhood on a college campus. Are you getting ready to order wisely your own daily program of work and play with no parent or teacher to remind you, guide you, or "make" you?

At college you can, *if you wish*, idle away your time, evade your duties, waste your money, and slide into the foul mire of intoxication of sensuality. Or, *if you so elect*, you can utilize every glorious opportunity, grow in every element of self-controlled manhood, and climb by God's grace a four-year road to the very stars. It isn't a question of *units* but of *manhood*.

Rest assured that if you go to college you cannot dodge this supreme issue. This new-found liberty will not leave you as it found you. It will searchingly test, unerringly reveal, and profoundly modify your character and destiny—will nourish or poison you, uplift or degrade you, make or break you, according to

your use or abuse of it. Like fire, electricity, or dynamite, personal liberty is a beneficent worker of miracles when under wise control, a destroying demon when it gains the mastery. Its razor-edge is too dangerous for a child to handle. *Are you "ready" for the freedom of manhood?*

How to Prepare.

The wisest of all pedagogical maxims is, "We learn to do by *doing*." Here is the method of preparation in one sentence: *By agreement with your parents and under their supervision, assume a steadily increasing range of personal liberties at home till by degrees you have so learned the art of self-control and self-direction that parental management of your daily routine of living and working becomes unnecessary.* To one thus "prepared" the marvelous combination of freedom and opportunity afforded by college life becomes a thrilling stimulus rather than a danger.

Three Practical Lessons.

Here are three practical lessons in self-direction which may be called Elementary, Intermediate, and Senior. The first will be rather fully described, the others, for lack of space, merely suggested.

1. The Elementary Course.

Every well-ordered life follows with unfailing regularity a personal *time-program* of daily actions. Yours would include getting up and going to bed at a definite time each day, attending to personal bathing, teeth, hair, shoes, clothes, etc., each morning, getting to three meals and to school on time every day, washing your hands and face before each meal, taking a thorough tub-bath on specified days, and attending certain religious services on time each Sunday. The week's program would thus include 50 or 60 items, each of which could be checked *O. T.* (performed on time), *T.* (performed but tardy), or *N.* (neglected).

The well-bred man does all these things of his own accord with unvarying regularity. The child must be continually reminded, scolded, ordered, or punished, to keep his performance anywhere near one hundred per cent.

Your first step toward self-controlled manhood is to relieve your parents of all responsibility for your daily personal time-program.

Propose this to them, promising to hand in each Saturday night your full week's record, with each item marked, and suggesting a one-dollar bill as a reward for each absolutely perfect weekly record.

Then get a good alarm clock, make out the full week's schedule of actions and times, hang a clear copy, with string and pencil attached, in your bedroom and another down stairs, warn all the grown-folks to *let you alone*, and then—*go to it*, with all the grit and grim determination you are capable of, making a better record every week till perfect scores have become easy and natural. *Then*—throw away your programs, accept the congratulations of your proud and happy parents, and call yourself a *full graduate* of the elementary SCHOOL OF MANHOOD.

2. The Intermediate Course.

Take over in exactly the same way your daily program of *study* and *recreation*, till no one need tell you when or what to study, when you may go to the ball-ground or attend the movies, or visit your friends. When you have enough wisdom and self-control to so order your own play and your own work that both are beyond criticism, with no one "bossing" you in this man's job, take my word for it, you are very nearly "ready for college."

3. The Senior Course.

The advanced course in the right use of freedom is receiving a weekly "salary," handling your own pocket money, selecting and purchasing your own clothes, shoes, etc., "saving up" for future expenditures, living within your income, and handing to your parents each week an accurate financial "statement."

When you have thus learned to handle wisely: first, your *Time*; second, your *Duties*; and third, your *Money*, kindly inform your parents from me that their home training has robbed college freedom of all its dangers, and their son is splendidly "ready" for the new world of college life and college opportunity.



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